

The pneumococcal shot— get it and forget it!

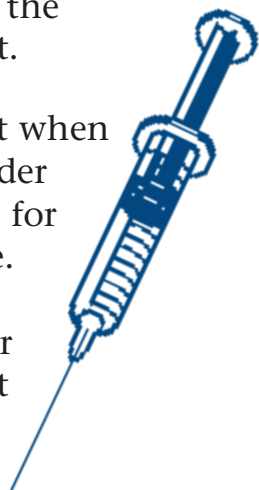
(Sometimes called the pneumonia shot)

There is a shot that can help to protect you from getting a serious infection in your lungs, blood and brain. Ask your doctor today about how you can prevent this infection with the pneumococcal shot.

Getting the shot when you're age 65 or older should protect you for the rest of your life. Some people may need to get another pneumococcal shot after five years. Your doctor can tell you if you are one of those people.

You can get the pneumococcal shot any time of the year. And best of all, Medicare Part B will pay for it.

The shot is safe and most people have no side effects.



Pneumococcal disease is a serious disease that can kill you

Pneumococcal disease is an infection that can affect your lungs, blood and brain. The disease causes your lungs to become inflamed and makes it harder for you to breathe. Pneumococcal disease can cause dangerous health problems, hospitalization or death. Thousands of older people are hospitalized with this disease each year. The pneumococcal shot reduces your chance of being hospitalized for this disease.

Pneumococcal disease usually causes fever, cough and shortness of breath. If it infects the brain, it causes headache, stiff neck and confusion or sleepiness. Diagnosing pneumococcal disease can be difficult, but your doctor often can tell if you have it by doing an examination and doing laboratory tests on blood, sputum or urine samples.

Other things you can do to protect yourself

* *Get an influenza (flu) shot every year.* Older adults are at high risk for complications from both the flu and pneumococcal disease. Often people get pneumococcal disease after they have been sick with the flu. So by getting a flu shot, you can also help to protect yourself against pneumococcal disease. The best way to protect yourself is to have both shots.

You can get your pneumococcal shot at the same time as your flu shot (one in each arm).

* *Take care of yourself.* Get plenty of rest and exercise. Eat a healthy diet with lots of fruits, vegetables and grains. Don't smoke. All of these things can help to keep you healthy and strong.



Half of all deaths from pneumococcal disease are among people age 65 and older

Pneumococcal disease can affect people of all ages, but it is especially dangerous for older adults. In fact, older people are two to three times more likely to get the disease than other adults.

If you have a chronic condition, pneumococcal disease is even more dangerous.

Your risk of serious illness or death is even higher if you have a chronic illness such as:

- * Lung disease (like emphysema)
- * Heart disease
- * Diabetes
- * Kidney disease

For more information about pneumococcal disease and the pneumococcal shot, talk with your doctor.

These Web sites also have good information:

American Lung Association

http://www.lungusa.org/diseases/pneumonia_factsheet.html

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=DS00135>

WebMD

<http://my.webmd.com>

CDC National Immunization Program

<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/pneumo/>
or call 1(800) 232-2522



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Pneumococcal Disease

Learn about how you can protect yourself from a leading killer of older people.

